2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

Shamanism

Shamans (*saxa ababyta*, Yakut priest, and *sābāki* in the Viliuisk District) are divided into two classes, white or creative shamans (*Ajy aÿuna*) and black or malevolent beings' shamans (*Abasy oyuna*). The white shaman serves as an intermediary between benevolent creative beings and mankind, whom he does not and cannot harm. He has no special shamanistic dress and does not even possess a drum. He bestows only blessings and asks the White-Lord-Creator to make beneficent gifts. He seldom addresses any other sky-dweller but the White-Lord-Creator: for instance, to cure barrenness he appeals to *Mohan Sylgylax* or some other deity. He does not kill cattle as a sacrifice; he only dedicates them to some sky dweller, after which the animal is not required to perform any work and is cared for and well fed.

Fig. 2 (70–9070). The Back of a Shaman's Ceremonial Coat.

The black shaman serves as an intermediary between evil spirits and men. He cures sick people by extracting from them the evil spirits causing the illness. The power and ability of the black shaman varies. His spirit protectors may dwell in the upper, middle, or lower worlds. The most powerful shaman is one who has wolf and bear spirits as his protectors. The black shaman may also harm men against whom he is ill-disposed, casting diseases and miseries on them.

Some information on Yakut shamanism was given in my publications on the Koryak and Yukaghir.[1] Here I shall treat the subject in more detail and add new drawings and additional explanations to the illustrations in these previous publications.

The Shaman's Coat. I succeeded in securing for the Museum three costumes of Yakut shamans. Two were secured in the Yakut District of

[1] Jochelson, Waldemar, The Koryak (*Memoirs, American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 10, 1905–1908), 21, 30, 36, 48, 53, 56, 57, 59, 61, 91, 92, 101, 102, 113, 119, 120; Jochelson, Waldemar, The Yukaghir and Yukaghirised Tungus (*Memoirs, American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 13, 1910–1926), 135, 158, 159, 182, 183, 185, 186.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

601 614 583 591 606 selves as the offspring of the mythical Omogoi-bai, in spite of the fact that they originate from his daughter, who married a Tatar or a Buryat. To the end of the eighteenth century, there remained in vogue among the Yakut the custom of concession of wives. Formerly the bridegroom lived permanently in the house of his father-in-law, but in more recent times he lived there only for a definite period.

The *kalym*, or bride-price, replaced the system of marriage by capture. The origin of the *kalym* may be seen in the simulated enmity of the mother-in-law and the son-in-law.

583 587 837 842 A matriarchal system presupposes looseness of sex relations. The chastity of girls in rich families is not a question of morality but of *kalym*. The *kalym* for a widow or a girl who has had children is low. In the case of a widow, the belief in the right of the deceased husband may limit the number of wooers. A girl with a child, however, is sometimes preferred as a guaranty against barrenness which the Yakut dislike. In Yakut tales, the guest does not ask, "Where shall I sleep?", but, "Where do you put your guests?" and then they are shown to the beds of the girls. This is a form of hospitable hetaerism.

212 592 595 As the ancient Yakut had no written records, we know very little of their former life and particularly of their internal organization. Our information may be summarized in the following.

A household or yard was called *yal;* a group of individuals, who formed a family, as well as each member of the group, was called *kŏrgŏn*. The family consisted of blood relatives as well as of relatives by marriage: sons-in-law, wives (polygamy), adopted children, laborers, and slaves of both sexes. When the Yakut polygamist had several wives, he had several *yals*.

567 592 601 888 At the head of the family was the *aga*, meaning primarily "elder in age" and then "father." All the people of the household were regarded as and called by him "my children," "my sons or my daughters." Among these were included not only his own children, but also all relatives by blood and marriage, by adoption, by purchase (slaves), and any other dependents, as war captives. The *aga* continued to rule as long as he preserved his physical and mental abilities. According to a Yakut tradition, aged parents and also sick and crippled people, unable to work, were doomed to die and were even buried alive after three days of abundant entertainment.

181 888 Trostchansky, who lived as a political exile among the Yakut for about twenty years, characterizes them as egoistical utilitarians.[1] He

[1] Trostchansky, V. F., Notes on the Yakut of the Yakutsk District (*Memoirs, Imperial Society for Archaeology, History, and Ethnography*, vol. 27, parts 2–4, Kasan, 1911, in Russian), 97.

6: Sauer--126 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 756, 782, 789, 842

"Travelling with Captain Billings to the river Mayo, I observed the following offering in the hut of Surtuyea Birdugin, an unchristened prince or chief, to Shessugai Toyon and his wife Aksyt, for the blessing of children, called Ogo Oyetto, the child's nest. It was a horse-hair cord tied round the chimney, leading to the sleeping place of the host and hostess, ornamented with bunches of horse hair. Two round pieces of the bark of birch, to represent sun and moon, suspended; also the representation of a stallion and a mare formed out of the bark, and a few wooden dolls dressed. The cord was fastened to the post at the head of their bed, where was placed a wicker basket with moss and fur at the bottom; and on a little table in the basket was set a very small wooden bowl, containing boiled flour; all of which was placed by a shaman with great magic ceremony. The prince has three wives, and was married 15 years without having had any children before this offering was made; but afterwards each of his wives bore their share of children, and he has now six sons and daughters. This account was related to Captain Billings and me in the presence of Mr. Hornossky, the captain of the district of Yakutsk, by the prince himself: each wife has her separate dwelling some miles distant from either of the others; and a similar offering is placed in each of their huts."

19: Kharuzin --53-54 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 178, 562, 587, 593, 842

Despite the fact that with respect to marriage the sons still are in a position of dependence upon the parents, their situation is considerably freer than that of the girls. A widowed daughter, returning to the parental home, again falls under the authority of the father; she is as devoid of rights as her young unmarried sister. The more independent position of the son is explained chiefly by the fact that the family and the clan prize children of the male sex more highly than those of the female sex: the birth of a boy is greeted by the Yakut with greater joy than the birth of a girl. Yakuts who do not have sons are scorned by their neighbors: they call them khatirik-uoma, i. e. "fire from bark (?)." The small esteem in which girl children are held by the Yakuts is indicated by the rule, whereby [54] a widow who marries for a second time must leave her sons by the first marriage with the family of her husband; but the daughters, as an unnecessary element in the family group, she can take with her to her new family. This rule is obviously of comparatively recent origin: it could arise only after the widow became free in general to marry outside of the confines of her husband's group, and after the kalym had begun to lose its significance of a purchase price for the bride, and had begun to return to the family of the bridegroom in the form of a dowry. Gaining nothing by giving a daughter in marriage, the Yakut familial-household group naturally regards daughters as a completely superfluous element in the family, and sets no value on them.